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U.S. War Manpower Commission

Manpower, one tenth of a nation

Washington

[1942?]

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one tenth of a nation

This is a pamphlet about war production, addressed to men whose business is production, to men who make all their decisions with the basic purpose of outproducing Hitler.

It aims to show how you, as a war production man, can follow the letter and spirit of Federal employment policy and help your country in doing so.

It aims to help you get needed workers in a tight labor market, and to help you protect your war production contract.

It is a pamphlet about you, your employees, and the Negro worker.

PAUL V. McNUTT,
Chairman, War Manpower Commission.

DONALD M. NELSON,
Chairman, War Production Board.

FRANK KNOX,
Secretary of the Navy.

ROBERT P. PATTERSON,
Acting Secretary of War.

MAY 28 1951 PJR

30,000,000 men for war

As a production man, you are familiar with the President's goals for this year—60,000 planes, 45,000 tanks, 20,000 antiaircraft guns, and 8,000,000 tons of shipping. To meet these goals, a minimum of 7,000,000 workers must be added to our war production force by the end of 1942.

At the same time over 1,500,000 young men—some of whom may be working today in *your* plant—will be called to our fighting forces. And more millions will be needed in 1943, until our war workers number 23,000,000.

You're going to need more workers, workers of every kind, skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled. You're going to need every worker you can get.

But labor is going to be short, very short. That means that no worker can be overlooked. It means that skilled workers must not be wasted on unskilled jobs. It means that we must get our whole labor force to work, with every man doing a job that fits the limit of his skill and strength.

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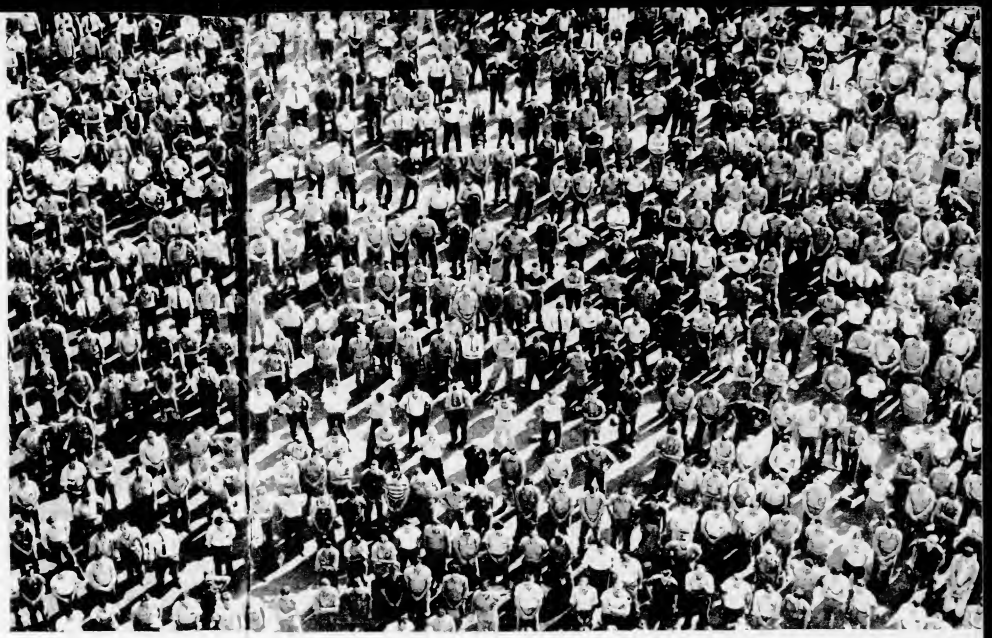

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5,000,000 willing workers

There are 120,000,000 white people in this country. There are almost 13,000,000 Negroes.

More than 5,000,000 of these American Negroes are workers. They are men and women of all skills and trades, in all parts of the country. Over 650,000 of them are already equipped for skilled or white-collar work, and more are being trained daily.

In 1941, for instance, more than 4,800 Negroes received college degrees in engineering, chemistry, various sciences, and liberal arts. More than 56,000 completed trades, industrial, professional, and clerical courses. An additional 56,000 enrolled in defense-training courses.

The pace has been accelerated in 1942. Negroes are entering war-training courses throughout the country. New classes are being established every day. In-plant training is being expanded for colored workers.

As a result of these wider training opportunities, some Negroes today are operating boring mills, punch presses, lathes, high-precision tools. They are doing inspection work, drafting, using blueprints. In shipbuilding, some Negroes are gang bosses and supervisors. They are finding their places in research laboratories and engineering departments. And Negro women are getting jobs in munitions plants.

But effective prosecution of the war calls for *full* use of our Negro labor resources.

Five million Negroes. Unskilled workers, lots of them. Semiskilled workers, lots of them. Craftsmen, artisans, highly skilled workers, tens of thousands of them.

If we use them, they are a great production asset. *If* we use them.

Making the machines that make America strong. Negro workers play an important part in the milling machine industry. The Negro worker at the left is chipping the rough spots from the inside of a machine tool bed casting.

This man helped build ship propellers in the last war. Today he is back at work in the same yard.

This precision-grinding job requires a high degree of skill. The slightest mistake may ruin the entire blade.

Women play an important role in war production. Below, training prepared this boy for his war job.

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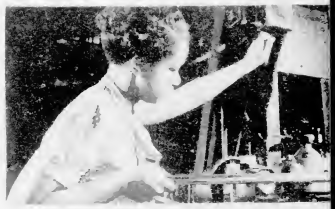

Women play an important role in war production. Below, training prepared this girl for her new role.

The whole nation pays

Discrimination limits production—because it keeps needed workers out of war plants; it keeps skilled men on unskilled jobs; it creates artificial labor shortages.

Every time you pass over a Negro worker, for no other reason than his color, either in hiring or in promotion, you place one more obstacle in the path of all-out production. Let's take a specific case.

Here's what happened in one mideastern city.

The contractors received huge orders for aircraft, ships, electrical and radio equipment, steel, iron, copper, and brass products. A labor shortage was inevitable, but despite repeated warnings employers maintained rigid bans against local Negro workers. They resorted instead to labor scouting and to the importation of white workers.

At the very time that this policy was being followed, the National Industrial Conference Board was completing a countrywide survey to compare the performance records of Negro workers with those of white workers.

Over 100 selected managements of industries employing Negroes were asked to grade colored and white employees on comparable skilled and semiskilled jobs. In ability and skill, 70 managements ranked Negro workers as equal to their white colleagues. In productivity, 85 managements found Negroes equal to their white workers. In regularity in attendance, 64 managements reported Negroes to be equal to their white fellow workers.

The Conference Board's survey closed with a suggestion that all firms having suitable work of any nature should make an honest effort to hire colored workers in proportion to the total population of the area.

A Congressional Committee investigated the unusual movement of workers into this mideastern city which had more than 10,000 unemployed Negroes.

The employment rolls of nine defense plants in this city leaped from 52,494 in January 1941 to 71,169 in September 1941. Yet more than 10,000 available local Negro workers remained unemployed.

The housing situation became critical. Rents skyrocketed. Transportation facilities were overcrowded. Health, fire protection, and policy problems were intensified—and migrant workers, homeless and exploited, quit their jobs, left town, returned home.

Employers appealed to Federal authorities for defense housing. We need 26,000 workers more, they cried, and we are already overcrowded. What are you going to do about it?

Government officials pointed to the still jobless Negroes.

"We cannot use Federal funds and war materials for defense housing when local workers are available and unemployed," they said.

* * *

A shipbuilding company in that city now has several hundred colored unskilled workers on its pay roll, and more Negroes are acquiring skills in its in-plant training courses. Other manufacturers have relaxed their bans. An aircraft manufacturer now employs Negroes in production work—and no skilled white workers have walked out.

Negro workers are being used; they are being upgraded; the artificial shortage of labor is being broken down.

But it took a long time—*time out from war production.*

the cost of discrimination

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We are using them . . .

Negroes are being used today in all branches of war industry. In United States Navy yards, in arsenals, in Army cantonments, and at naval bases, thousands of skilled and semiskilled Negroes are at work.

In the last year, the War Department has added more than 4,000 Negroes to its civilian staff in Washington. Approximately 50 percent of these are stenographers, typists, and clerks. Between October 1941 and March 1942, the Navy Department more than doubled its colored civilian personnel in the District of Columbia.

Government has also helped private industry to extend Negro employment—through the work of the Negro Manpower Service of the War Manpower Commission, and the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice, established under Executive Order 8802.

Tens of thousands of Negroes are speeding ship construction on both Coasts; additional thousands are pushing production goals in aircraft, iron and steel, converted auto plants, rubber, garment manufacture, ordnance plants, meat packing, and many other industries.

but we are not using them enough

In a recent survey of the hiring schedules of selected defense employers, the Bureau of Employment Security reported that 51 percent of 282,245 expected job openings were barred to Negro workers.

In the United States at that time, at least 500,000 male and an equal number of female colored workers were either unemployed or underemployed. Not only were these potential workers available, but many of them were living in areas where general labor shortages existed, and where large-scale immigration of white labor had occurred.

Before the Government tackled the problem, nearly three-quarters of all our defense plants refused to hire Negroes except as janitors. Many of those which did hire Negroes for industrial work confined them to jobs below their skills.

Can we afford to limit production—merely because of the color of a worker's skin?

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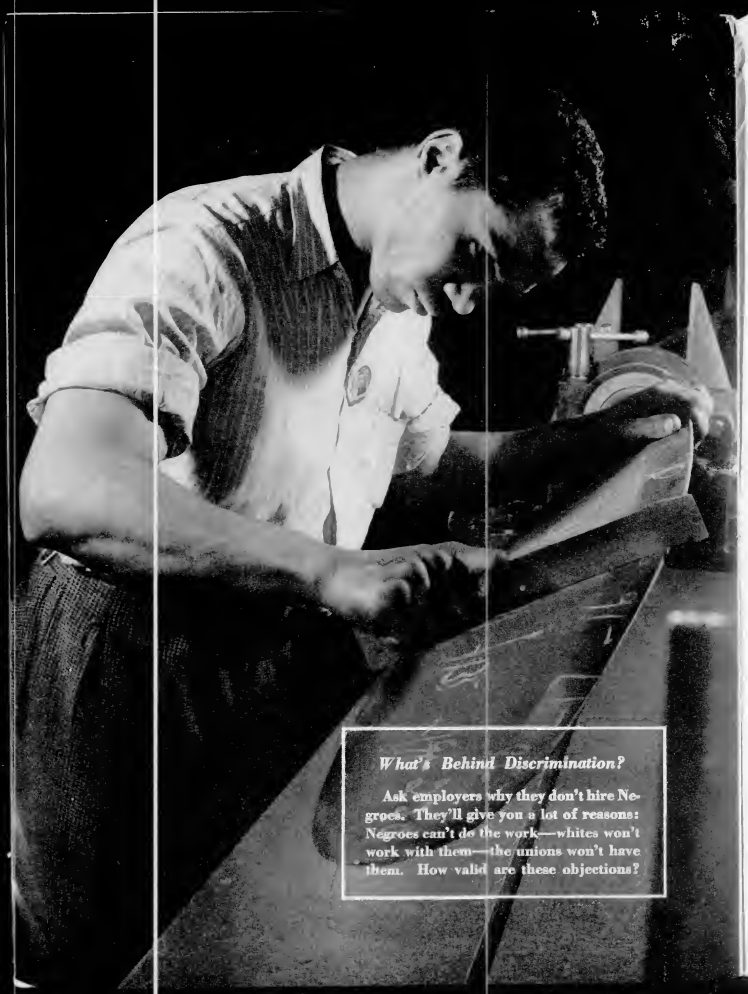


What's Behind Discrimination?

Ask employers why they don't hire Negroes. They'll give you a lot of reasons: Negroes can't do the work—whites won't work with them—the unions won't have them. How valid are these objections?

Objection No. 1

"***Negroes Just Can't Do the Work.***" The Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company employs more than 6,000 Negroes as machine operators, outside machinists, stage builders, riggers, bolters, drillers, regulators, chippers, caulkers, blacksmiths, and skilled, semiskilled, and unskilled workers in a dozen other categories.

This Company says:

"Of our workmen, approximately 27 percent are colored, all of whom receive the same pay as the white workers when performing similar work."

Negroes have always done skilled work. How else would the 1930 census list 12,000 Negro brickmasons, 33,000 carpenters, 2,000 electricians, 8,000 machinists, 27,000 mechanics, 19,000 painters, 4,000 chemical workers, 25,000 iron and steel workers, 63 architects, 351 technical engineers, and 25,000 clerks.

When the defense program was launched, there had been sufficient employment of Negroes by American industry to convince most people that Negroes, as individuals and when subjected to the usual processes of training and selection, can do any and all types of production jobs.

Yet many Negroes are still excluded from skilled work. "That's white men's work," they are told.

We cannot afford the luxury of thinking in terms of "white men's work." It isn't "white men's work" we have to do—it's war work, and there's more than enough of it.

Objection No. 2

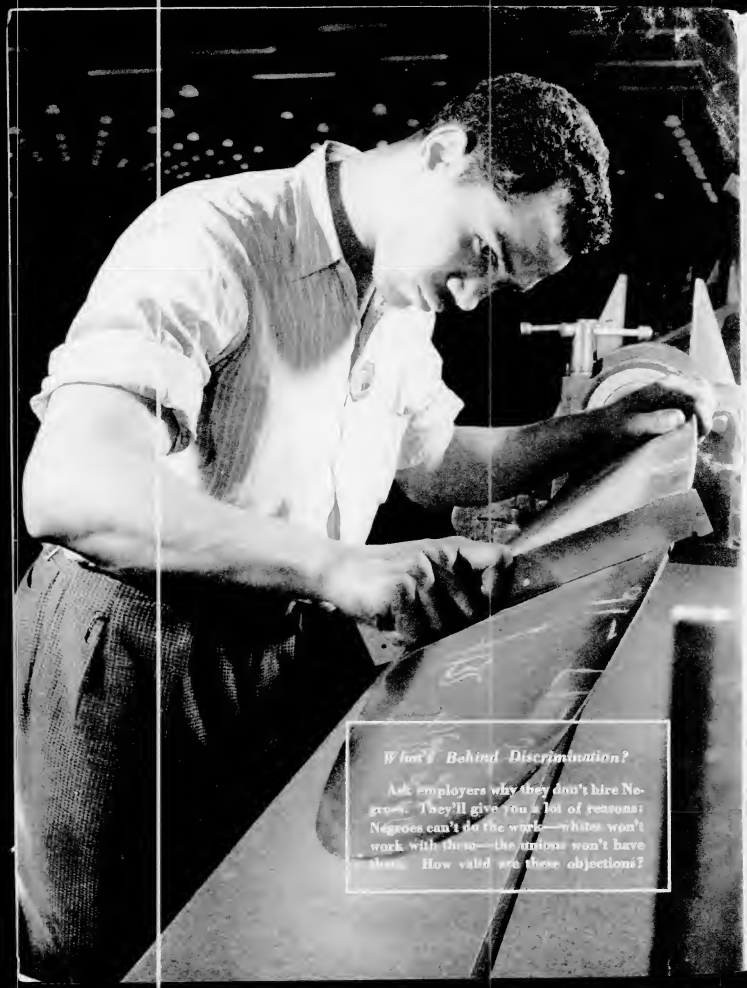
"***Whites and Negroes Just Won't Work Together.***" Ever hear that one? The best answer to this one is a simple truth: Negroes and whites do work together.

They are working together in plants like Ford, Kelsey Hayes, Murray Corporation, and others—in plants like Bethlehem Shipbuilding and the Denver Ordnance Plants—in the shipyards of Virginia and North Carolina—in the iron and coal fields of Alabama—in all parts of the country.

They are working together at Lockheed-Vega Aircraft Corporation. Until September 1941, Lockheed had never hired a Negro among its 40,000 workers. Then Cyril Chappellet, Secretary of the Corporation, sent every executive and supervisor a memorandum announcing the company's intention to abide by the President's Executive Order banning discrimination in defense employment, and to train and employ Negroes "in capacities commensurate with their individual skills and aptitudes." By February 1942, more than 350 Negroes were on the company's pay roll, most of them in production work. Randall Irwin, Lockheed's Director of Industrial Relations, says this:

"I am happy to say that our supervisors and employees are entering into this program with a wholesome attitude."

Mason L. Arnold, an assistant foreman at Lockheed, said of the first Negro sent to his department "most of the fellows are showing him 100 percent cooperation . . . it is my opinion that regardless of color, employees of Vega think and act mainly in terms of Americanism."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Objection No. 3

"The Unions Won't Let Us Hire Negroes." Less than two dozen of the more than 200 major unions in this country have constitutional bans against Negro workers. In many cases of union discrimination the Goverment has stepped in to get for Negroes full membership or work permits.

An employer who meets union resistance to his attempts to hire Negroes may invoke the full support of the Federal Government, the President of the United States, and the heads of both major labor groups. Philip Murray of the CIO and William Green of the AFL are members of the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practice, which investigates violations of Executive Order 8802. President Roosevelt himself has intervened personally in cases where an isolated union refused to let Negroes work.

In several plants, local unions have made specific requests for the hiring and upgrading of Negro workers. In others, union officials have halted strikes or demonstrations when white workers objected to the introduction of Negro skilled workers. Some CIO and AFL unions have formed joint action committees to speed the employment of Negroes.

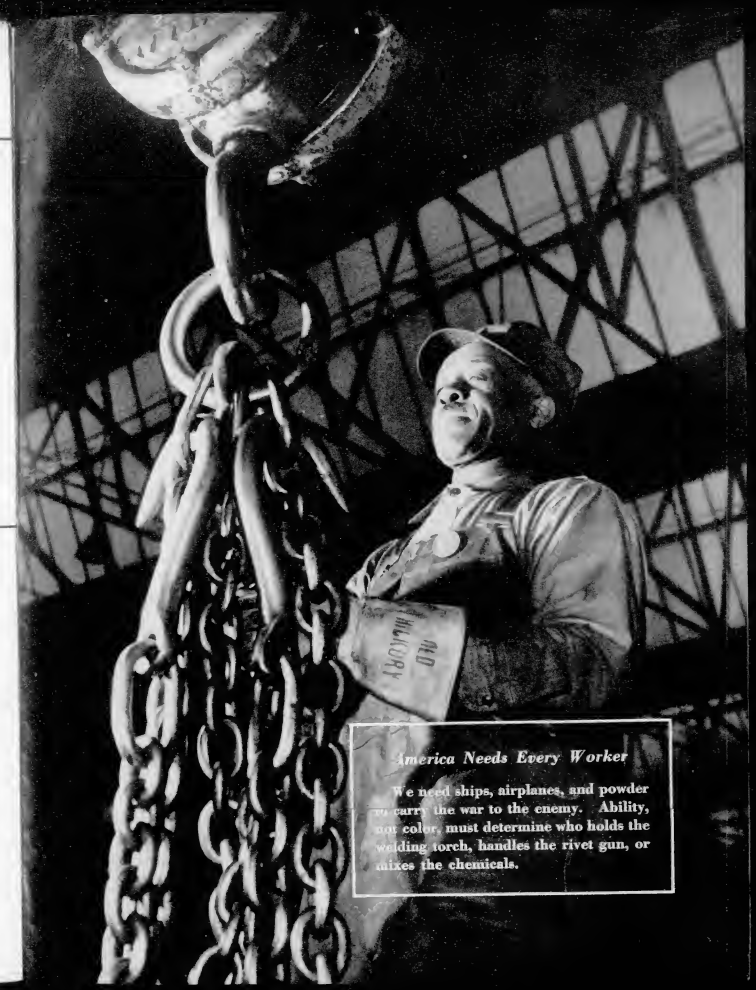
One official of a large local union recently stated: "The policy of our union for all-out production to win the war cannot be fully carried out unless all available manpower is put to work. . . . We not only believe the Negro people must be afforded equal opportunity to fight for this country, but we also believe they must be given equal opportunity to work for this country."

Objection No. 4

"We're Only Interested in Production." The employment of Negroes *is* a production factor. As an outstanding industrial magazine recently pointed out, "Today it is more profitable to management to upgrade Negro janitors to semiskilled or skilled jobs than to train white workers from outside the plant: it is more profitable to use the unemployed Negroes of the community than to import white workers from other cities. The Battle of Production will be won by skills and by manpower—recruited, trained, upgraded, and fully utilized regardless of race, creed, color, nationality, sex, or age.

"The full impact of the labor shortage has not yet been felt; it may not be felt until late this year or next year. When it comes, some employers, having already trained Negroes and begun to work them into their employment pattern, will be better able to continue production unimpaired by labor stringencies."

Unless American industry uses qualified Negro workers, and trains thousands of additional Negroes, just as we train white men and women, we cannot have full production.



America Needs Every Worker

We need ships, airplanes, and powder to carry the war to the enemy. Ability, not color, must determine who holds the welding torch, handles the rivet gun, or mixes the chemicals.

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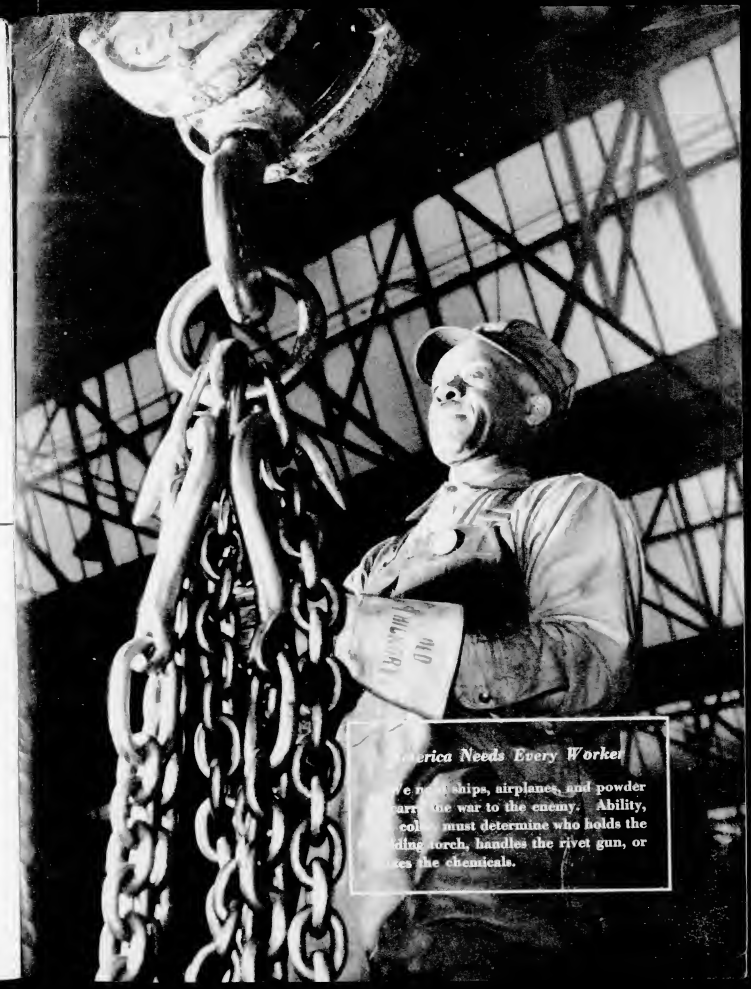

...erica Needs Every Worker
...e need ships, airplanes, and powder ...arry the war to the enemy. Ability, ... color, must determine who holds the ...lding torch, handles the rivet gun, or ...es the chemicals.

What you can do about it

You can hire Negroes, and you can upgrade them and use them as you do other workers. If your interviewers will realize that Negroes differ—just as much as whites—from man to man, they will get the right man for the job.

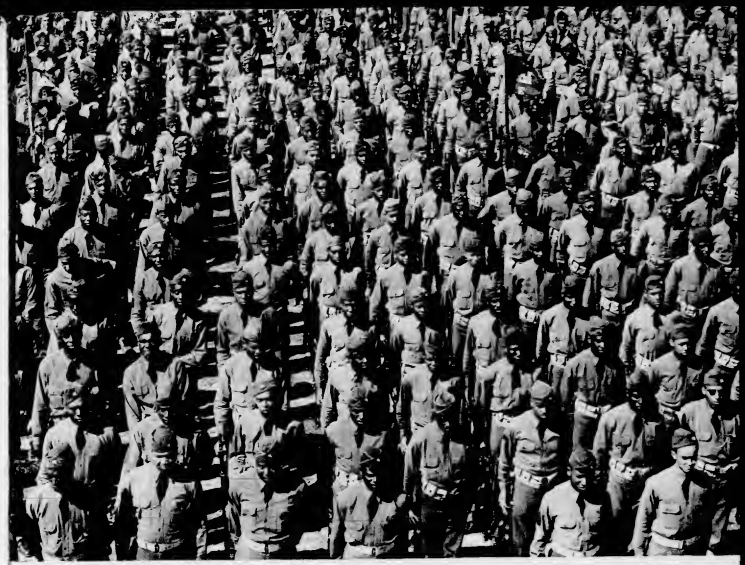
(1) See to it that the fair employment policy of your company is in fact the policy of all of your company's agents. As the Chicago Employers' Association put it: "Guard against acts and statements by you and your supervisors, from foreman to president, which may be construed as discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin—such acts and statements are the employers' responsibility."

(2) If you have a union in your plant, seek its help. A policy which the workers help to make will have their support. They can do much to prevent friction and secure the cooperation of your workers.

(3) Enlist the aid of Negro organizations and of the United States Employment Service in getting qualified Negro personnel. These organizations are prepared to help you get trained men. The National Urban League, for instance, has branches in 45 cities. This organization and similar ones cooperate with industry in finding available Negro labor. The 1,500 local offices of the United States Employment Service have been instructed to call the attention of war contractors to available Negroes. The Negro Manpower Service and all other branches of the War Manpower Commission and the War Production Board will lend all assistance to your efforts to hring Negro workers into war production.

(4) As you hire Negroes for the factory, hire them also for your offices. There are thousands of capable Negro clerical workers.

(5) When you consider the employment of women, consider Negro women also. Hundreds of them are already employed in war production—we need the additional thousands now available.



(6) Enlist the cooperation of your supervisory personnel and see that they secure the cooperation of your workers.

(7) Give Negroes in your plant training opportunities equal to those you give to white workers. Study should be given to the local supplies of Negro labor so as to devise programs for the training and employment of workers in capacities which will make them most productive. These things cannot be done overnight. They must be anticipated and planned. In a word, since such employment is generally inevitable, steps should be taken now to start it. Many sound managements realize this and are acting accordingly. Their number must be increased if we are to meet our production goals.

The pictures used in this booklet were obtained from the following: National Housing Agency, OWI Photographic Section, Army Signal Corps, and Farm Security Administration.

What you can do about it

You can hire Negroes, and you can upgrade them at base them as you do other workers. If your interviewers will realize that Negroes differ not as much as whites from man to man, they will get the right man for the job.

(1) See to it that the fair employment policy of your company is in fact the policy of all of your company's agents. As the Chicago Employers' Association put it: "Guard against acts and statements by you and your supervisors, from foreman to president, which may be construed as discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin—such acts and statements are the employers' responsibility."

(2) If you have a union in your plant, seek its help. A policy which the workers help to make will have their support. They can do much to prevent friction and secure the cooperation of your workers.

(3) Enlist the aid of Negro organizations and of the United States Employment Service in getting qualified Negro personnel. These organizations are prepared to help you get trained men. The National Urban League, for instance, has branches in 45 cities. This organization and similar ones cooperate with industry in finding available Negro labor. The 1,500 local offices of the United States Employment Service have been instructed to call the attention of war contractors to available Negroes. The Negro Manpower Service and all other branches of the War Manpower Commission and the War Production Board will lend all assistance to your efforts to bring Negro workers into war production.

(4) As you hire Negroes for the factory, hire them also for your offices. There are thousands of capable Negro clerical workers.

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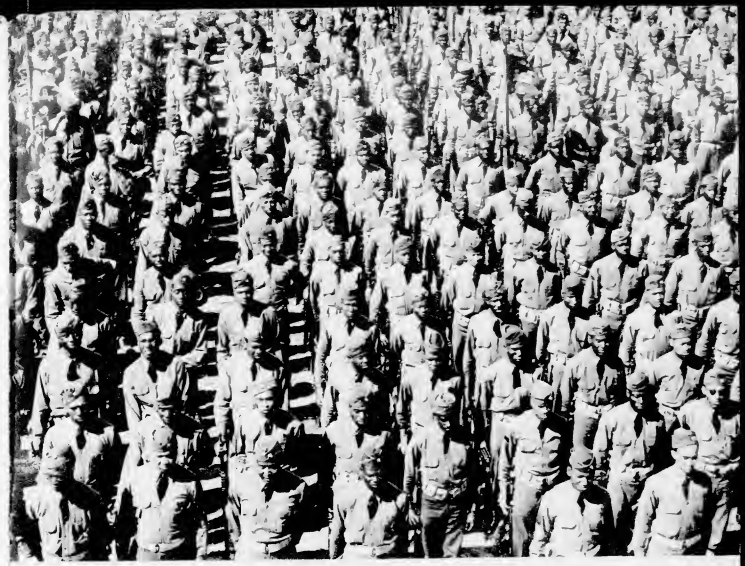

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Executive Order 8802

Reaffirming Policy of Full Participation in the Defense Program by All Persons, Regardless of Race, Creed, Color, or National Origin, and Directing Certain Action in Furtherance of Said Policy.

. . . I do hereby declare that it is the duty of employers and of labor organizations, in furtherance of said policy and of this order, to provide for the full and equitable participation of all workers in defense industries, without discrimination because of race, creed, color, or national origin;

And it is hereby ordered as follows: . . .

All contracting agencies of the Government of the United States shall include in all defense contracts hereafter negotiated by them a provision obligating the contractor not to discriminate against any worker because of race, creed, color, or national origin. . . .

Franklin D. Roosevelt

The White House, June 25, 1941

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TITLE